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Claims

[c1] A method for installing tiles on a vertical support surface, comprising the steps of:
providing a device having an elongate, straight configuration;
forming in said device a plurality of longitudinally spaced apart openings;
adapting each of said openings to accommodate a fastener means;
providing a tile support surface along an upper edge of said device;
making an elongate level marker on said vertical support surface at a predetermined location thereon;
positioning said device in abutting, overlying relation to said vertical support surface and rotating said device against said vertical support surface until said tile support surface is coincident with said elongate level marker;
fastening said device to said vertical support surface by inserting a fastener means through at least two of said openings;
installing a lowermost row of tiles on said vertical support surface such that said lowermost row of tiles is sup-

ported by said tile support surface;
removing said fastener means after said tile installation is complete; and
removing said device from said overlying relation to said vertical support surface;
whereby said lowermost row of tiles in said tile installation is level; and
whereby subsequent rows of tiles using said lowermost row of tiles as a foundation are also level.

[c2] The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
mounting on said device a spirit level having a bubble;
orienting the spirit level with respect to the device so that said tile support surface is level when the bubble is centered in the spirit level;
positioning said device in abutting, overlying relation to said vertical support surface and rotating said device against said vertical support surface until said tile support surface is level as indicated by said spirit level.

[c3] The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
elongating each of said openings so that said fastener means may be inserted into said vertical support surface at any preselected location along the length of said respective openings.

[c4] The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:

axially misaligning the openings with respect to one another to maintain structural integrity of said device.

[c5] The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
forming a first releasable coupler in a first end of said device;
forming a second releasable coupler in a second end of said device;
adapting said first releasable coupler to releasably engage said second releasable coupler so that two of said devices may be releasably coupled to one another in end-to-end relation by releasably coupling said first releasable coupler at a first end of a first device to the second releasable coupler at a second end of a second device.

[c6] The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
dimensioning a base of said device to have a first predetermined depth;
dimensioning said tile support surface to have a second predetermined depth greater than said first predetermined depth;
forming said base and tile support surface so that they share a common flat back wall adapted to abuttingly engage said vertical support surface;
sizing said second predetermined depth so that it is approximately equal to a combined thickness of a tile and

of a layer of adhesive underlying said tile.

[c7] The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
forming a plurality of notches in said device along the extent thereof;
forming each notch of said plurality of notches so that it has a depth only slightly less than a depth of said device;
bending said device at said notches so that said device overlies a convex wall.

[c8] The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
forming a plurality of notches in said device along the extent thereof;
forming each notch of said plurality of notches so that it has a depth only slightly less than a depth of said device;
bending said device at said notches so that said device overlies a concave wall.

[c9] A tool having utility in tile installation, comprising:
an elongate device having a straight configuration;
said elongate device including a tile supporting surface, said tile supporting surface being flat;
a spirit level having a bubble mounted on said device;
said spirit level oriented on said device such that said tile supporting surface is level when the bubble is centered in the spirit level;
said device including a pair of longitudinally spaced

apart openings formed therein;
each of said openings adapted to accommodate a fastener means;
whereby a lowermost row of tiles installed on said vertical surface is supported by said device;
whereby said lowermost row of tiles in said tile installation is level; and
whereby said fastener members are removed after said tile installation is complete so that the device can be reused.

[c10] The tool of claim 9, further comprising:
each of said openings being elongate so that said fastener means may be inserted into said vertical surface at any preselected location along the length of said respective openings.

[c11] The tool of claim 10, further comprising:
said openings being axially misaligned with respect to one another to maintain structural integrity of said device.

[c12] The tool of claim 9, further comprising:
a first releasable coupler formed in a first end of said device;
a second releasable coupler formed in a second end of said device;

said first releasable coupler adapted to releasably engage said second releasable coupler so that two of said devices are releasably coupled to one another in end-to-end relation by releasably coupling said first releasable coupler at a first end of a first device to the second releasable coupler at a second end of a second device.

[c13] The tool of claim 9, further comprising:
said device having a base of a first predetermined depth;
said device having a tile support surface having a second predetermined depth greater than said first predetermined depth;
said base and tile support surface sharing a common flat back wall adapted to abuttingly engage said vertical surface;
said second predetermined depth sized so that it is approximately equal to a combined thickness of a tile and of a layer of grout underlying said tile.

[c14] The tool of claim 9, further comprising:
a plurality of notches formed in said device along its extent;
each of said notches extending into said base and said tile support surface so that said device may be bent at each notch;
whereby said device has utility in tile installation proce-

dures that are performed on convex and concave vertical support surfaces.

[c15] The tool of claim 14, further comprising:
each of said notches having a common depth.

[c16] The tool of claim 15, further comprising:
said notches being equidistantly spaced relative to one another along the extent of said device.